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ABSTRACT

The report on education in Bangladesh summarizes educational trends since 1971 and objectives of the first five year plan (1973-78). Population growth and illiteracy are the two major national problems. During the liberation war many students left schools to join the army, and most school buildings were either demolished or closed down. Thus, immediate tasks for education involve reopening schools to provide minimum physical facilities, and defining the function of education in the changed sociocultural context. Strategies for national educational development include integration of education with rural development, promotion of nonformal education, and introduction of population education. Efforts to eliminate illiteracy are aimed mainly at the adult population. Attitudes must be changed to accept technological development; literacy programs must encourage self-reliance and introduce technological innovation. Nonformal and community education programs stress these needs. In the schools, Bangla has replaced English as the language of instruction, but textbooks are not readily available in Bangla. Reorganization of the overly centralized system of educational administration is needed. (AV)

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DEVELOPMENT IN EDUCATION

IN BANGLADESH

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BANGLADESH DELEGATION

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DEVELOPMENT IN EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH : 1975-77

1. Bangladesh: A Country Background

1.1. Bangladesh is a small country of about 55 thousand square miles and has a population at present of about 78 million people. The population now grows at a rate of 3 percent a year, and explosion in population has been identified by the Government as the first major problem of the nation. Even if all the efforts of the Government to bring down the growth rate of population to 2 percent by the year 1979-80 succeed, the population of the country is likely to rise considerably by that time. Bangladesh is a land almost fully rural in character, and so are 91.22 percent of its population. The majority of the people live on agriculture, and agriculture thrives as the land is fertile. But it also suffers, and suffers almost annually, because of natural calamities, mainly in the form of extensive floods and devastating cyclones. The per capita income is around U. S. $ 70 dollars. The socio- economic infra-structure is poor. Industry has grown only on a limited scale. The rural unemployment is estimated to be around 30 percent. The educated are also largely unemployed; and so are those who live in the cities. Women in general do not constitute an economic force. Schools are inadequate in number, and the existing physical facilities in those leave much to be desired. School drop-out at the primary level is high. Students tend to go for higher education, even when such education may not be of any particular help in their eventual profession. Traditional values are rooted deep in the minds of the people. But, then, the people are keen to overcome the trying circumstances in which they live. Their constant effort is to raise their own standard of living and they realise that the only way to achieve this is through developmental programmes. There is widespread awareness of the limitations of the education system and consequent demand for its improvement. The entire socio-cultural context has undergone a change, development in all spheres being identified as the main objective of the nation. It is not isolated development in a particular

sector alone ; it is development of the nation as a whole in an integrated and co-ordinated manner. Development is for the people and the people are the principal agents of development. There is consequently emphasis on rural self-reliance, rural development, utilization of total manpower as well as unutilised and under utilised resources and establishment and maintenance of appropriate linkage between all sectors of the economy. Education in Bangladesh today is conditioned by these circumstances and its policies and priorities also stem from these.

2. Policies in the Education Sector

2.1 The constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh dictates that the State shall adopt effective measures for the purpose of establishing a uniform mass-oriented and universal system of education, relating to education needs of society and producting properly trained and motivated citizens to serve these needs and removing illiteracy within the shortest possible time.

2.2. The First Five Year Plan covering the period 1973-78 endeavours

a) to make education responsive to the specific needs of the nation by relating it to productive employment;

b) to produce, either through formal and non-formal system of education, a cadre of skilled manpower required for development needs of the country;

c) to develop an open educational system which would widen the range of choices available to the learners and permit them to move both horizontally and vertically; and to provide necessary facilities for the exercise of the inherent right of all citizens to attain a minimum level of education;

d) to do away with the strict compartmentalization of primary, secondary and higher education and instead aim at reaching a spectrum of education which would be open to all, through innovative measures;

e) to make use of education as a vehicle to enrich the cultural attainments of the people;

f) to gear higher education to the technological needs and manpower of the country; and

g) to gradually develop an appropriate educational administration system in accordance with the requirments of the nation.

2.3. Actions initiated and programmes developed in the education sector during the period under review were based on the broad policy guidelines enunciated in the Constitution and in the First Five Year Plan. The first few years of independence was marked with characteristic confusion which was the inevitable outcome of a liberation war in which people died in thousands and towns and villages were destroyed in hundreds. The liberation war had affected the education sector in particular, in two ways: first, the students had left schools and colleges and joined the liberation army in a large number, and, secondly, the educational institutions were either demolished or closed down or utilised by the occupation force for the purposes of war. The entire education system was upset. The major tasks in the education sector immediately after liberation were, therefore,

a) to re-establish the education system itself through rehabilitation of students and teachers:
b) to re-construct schools and colleges and to provide minimum physical facilities including books and laboratory equipments; and
c) to define the role and function of education in the changed national and socio-cultural context.

Bangladesh emerged as an independent country in late 1971 and tried to concentrate during the first few years of its independence on the problems caused by the war of liberation. By 1975 it could be seen that there was yet much to be done, and there was a growing realization that it was not within the resources of the country nor within the ability of its limited manpower in the education sector to undertake major efforts in all directions at one and the same time. Priorities were to be determined, and determined within the overall context of national objectives and aspirations. Realities in the education sector were also to be taken into account and education was to be linked to the people and their life as intimately as possible. It was therefore decided to emphasise developmental activities in all spheres of the education sector, so that the basic requirements of a sound education system could be met as early as possible. Apart from this emphasis on developmental activities, the prinicipal strategies evolved to achieve the national educational targets were, among others,

a) integration of education with the process of rural development;
b) development and strengthening of non-formal education;

c) work-oriented education:
d) development of productive and employable skills:
e) community based education: and
f) introduction and development of population education.

3. Education for Development

3.1. Education has its own justification. Knowledge is basic to human existence, and acquisition of knowledge is both a process and an end by itself and need not be motivated by any particular consideration nor depend on any special causes or circumstances for its own validity. Even then, when education is viewed as an essential element of existence at the level not of an individual but of a nation, and when education becomes a part of the total responsibility of a State, it becomes imperative for the State to determine the role of education as a basic force for the maintenance of the national character and for transition from time to time to various phases of national growth, and also to identify the desired contribution of education to, and its relationship with, the other areas of the life of a nation. National objectives must be viewed as a whole, and education, as any other sector, much address itself not only to its own problems, but to the problems of the nation as a unified and integrated entity. And the problem of Bangladesh as a nation is the problem of ensuring minimum facilitities essential for a respectable living by all its citizens : its objective-development, in terms of economic progress and socio-cultural advancements. Education in Bangladesh is education for development.

3.2. In view of widespread illiteracy, conventional approaches towards problems of life and Communication gap between the people in general and those actively engaged in development efforts in the one hand and between the people themselves in the various segments of society on the other, the first objective of education in Bangladesh is to create an awareness of the need for development. The second, naturally, is to equip the people to face the challenges of the development endeavours. Education must develop a new value system necessary for and appropriate to the development process including technological and other innovations and must also provide the people with the knowledge and skills necessary for the successful implementation of the development programmes as well as innovations aimed at development. Quality

of education has to be improved at all levels. The traditional social setting which more often than not stands in the way of the realization of development aspirations of the nation must be changed, and, along with it, the overall cultural context of the nation must also be able to achieve new dimensions. It is clearly agreed that it is for education to break these new grounds.

3.3. Integrated rural development is a major concern of the Government in Bangladesh to-day. This is integration for providing the rural people with better production and marketing facilities aimed at generating higher income which in its turn would call for an equitable distribution in order to enhance the quality of life of all. This is integration of the various segments of the rural society to ensure the participation of all the rural people, specially the disadvantaged, in the production and development process. This is integration to make economic development in the rural areas socially and culturally meaningful and relevant. Mere physical changes and economic advancement are important by themselves but do not constitute the totality of an integrated rural development programme which aims at attaining basic changes in the value system-an indispensible pre-condition of all rural development efforts "Education is not merely a component of rural development but a force, a mechanism, to achieve this integration". Keeping this basic characteristic in view, Bangladesh has developed its own approach towards integrated rural development. This is known as the Comilla Approach. The Comilla Model has its basis in a two tier co-operative system which touches the very roots of the rural societiy, and, through a process of creating awareness among the people and of providing necessary infra-structure for higher production, attempts to develop a new leadership in the rural areas. Education in general and training of the rural manpower in various allied fields of production in particular, provide the basic strength to the Comilla Approach. In the special project areas of integrated rural development, such as the Bogra-Mymensingh Project and the Sirajgong Project, education has been vitally linked with the total process of development and the non-formal approach in education has particularly been commissioned to bridge the gap between the rural people with their lack of appropriate skills and technology on the one hand and the current philosophy of development and its manifestation in the technical know-how and socio-economic innovations on the other.

3.4. The importance of education for rural development came sharply into focus with the growing realization that rural development must necessarily arise from the initiative and active participation of the rural people themselves. Education has therefore emerged as an essential pre-condition of integrated rural development. The people in the rural areas, who have suffered for ages and have accepted this state of suffering as irrideemable have to be made conscious, through a process of education, of the precise nature of the limitations which condition their life and of their inherent ability and strength to be able to overcome such limitations. It is the task of education to inspire them to bring about improvement in their own standard of living, and it is the task of education to sustain this new approach to life and to make it stronger in the face of great odds once the rural people have been inspired. Bangladesh aims attaining rural development through a process of self-reliance the people themselves must try their best to make use of the unutilised and under-utilised resources around themselves and must change their own lives into forces of development. The self-reliance movement has largely caught the imagination of the people and education has made its own contribution to the awakening of this spirit.

3.5. The Ministry of Education is represented on the Rural Development Council which is the highest policy-making body for rural development and is presided over by the President. In preparing the curriculum and the syllabus for the primary and secondary students, problems in rural areas and the basic elements of the rural environment have been emphasised to make the education process responsive to the needs and aspirations of the rural community. Attemps are being made to link formal and non-formal education. Non-formal education by itself has been recognised as a major instrument of change for the purpose of rural development. The education system also addresses itself to the development of productive skills related to development activities. Rural communities are being involved in the planning, management and supervision of both educational institutions and educational programmes. Rural development policies get a clear priority in the teacher training programmes and in the programmes for the professional growth of teachers and other educational personnel. Research studies on problems of rural development are carried out by the universities and there are instances where the teachers and students of

the universities have actively participated in major rural development projects. One of such projects the excavation of an important river was initiated and carried out by students and teachers of the Agricultural University in collaboration with people from other walks of life. The National Development Group, which monitors and co-ordinates educational innovation at the national level, includes representatives from the Rural Development sector and attempts to link innovation to the needs of the people in the rural areas. Rural development is closely connected with the development of total manpower of the country, and the education system, while assuming the responsibility for the development of manpower, takes into account the particular circumstances obtaining in the rural areas.

3.6. The other major problem for concern to the Goverment is population explosion. Ambitious programmes have been undertaken for the introduction of family planning measures on a wide scale. But here again it is the traditional out-look of the people which has largely stood in the way of a major break-through. Education has played an important role in bringing about a change of attitude in this area. The people in the rural areas have to a considerable extent ceased to view family planning programmes with suspicion. Population education is being introduced in the formal school system and for this purpose an appropriate curriculum is being developed and the teachers are being trained. A small administrative unit in each of the nineteen districts of the country has been selected for the purpose of a pilot scheme which aims at training the teachers of primary schools for population education. These teachers are expected to work as change agents and opinion leaders and may also be called upon to work with the family planning workers for implementation of the programmes in this area. Research on evaluation of population education programmes also constitute an important aspect of efforts to establish a close connection between the education system and the first major problem of the country.

3.7. The close link between the education system on the one hand and problems of integrated rural development and of population explosion on the other is only illustrative of the way in which education in Bangladesh today is viewed as a major weapon for development. This is the philosophy which has worked behind, of all the major efforts that have been made in the

education sector since 1975. To sum up, the purpose of education, as carried out as a responsibility of the State, is to turn itself into an effective instrument for the establishment of a value system appropriate to the development aspirations of the country and to tune all channels of education to the total developmental efforts of the country as a whole and to demonstrate that these efforts are based on the conditions obtaining in the country and on the realities of life as experienced by its people. A review of the major trends in the education sector will hopefully further illustrate the working of this philosophy.

4. Major Trends in Education 1975-77

4.1. The first important step that was taken in the education sector during the period under review was to concentrate on developmental activities and ensure quantitative expansion of the physical facilities. The developmental activities were organised on the basis of two principal strategies, the first of which was consolidation and the second in a limited way, expansion. It was considered necessary to urgently meet the inadequacies and limitations of whatever developmental efforts were made in the past, specially during first few years of independence. The development projects were to be completed in all their aspects so that these could be in a position for being commissioned fully for the purpose of education. Along with these efforts towards consolidation of development activities, projects were undertaken and programmes launched to cover new areas and also to bring as many educational institutions as possible within the areas of programmes launched earlier. These efforts at consolidation and at expansion of developmental programmes were made at all levels, from primary upto university. The overall national objectives were taken into account during the formulation of these programmes.

4.2. The total amount spent on development activities in 1976-77 was around Taka 483 million (US $ 1 = Taka 15.50). There were 102 projects and the number of single institutions involved was around ten thousand. These developmental programmes were carried out inspite of serious limitations. Money was not made available in time; many of the field officers were inexperienced ; many did not have adequate staff support; the construction work was mainly left to the Public Works Department which had its own limitations; it took some time before the administrative arrangements for these developmental activities

could be effectively streamlined; and finally, selection of schools and constitution of committees for the purpose of supervision proved to be time consuming. These and other problems did exist, but constant efforts were made to overcome these.

4.3. The major development projects, under-taken during this period, included projects for improvement and development of primary schools and of primary education; establishment of an Academy for Fundamental Education; development of 60 secondary schools at sub-divisional towns; development of 79 Government schools; development of 700 non-Government boys' and girls' secondary schools in the rural areas; development of cadet colleges; development of 35 Government colleges; development of 17 non-Government girls' colleges; development of 35 non-Government colleges at sub-divisional headquarters; development of 137 non-Government colleges; development of training institutes for primary teachers; development of the teachers' training colleges and colleges of education as well as the Education Extension and Research Institutes, and development of 157 non-Government Madrasas (theological schools).

4.4. There was a marked emphasis on the technical and vocational education in the developmental activities undertaken during the period under review. There were development schemes for improvement of three existing engineering colleges; development of polytechnic institute in Dacca; introduction of food technology; expansion of polytechnic institutes; expansion of technical institutes; re-organization of textile and leather technology institutes; establishment of a polytechnic institute for women, and establishment of 55 vocational training institutes.

4.5. The general objectives of the development scheme for the improvement of primary education were

a) to provide minimum functional physical facilities to the existing primary schools;
b) to provide basic supplies and equipment for the primary schools;
c) to provide assistance for the development of supplementary reading learning materials for primary school children; and
d) to develop a limited number of schools as community learning centres.

Under this scheme, about four thousand incomplete school buildings are expected to be completed, and to have, on completion, at least three class rooms each. Basic class room structures are to be provided to about four thousand schools which were never before taken up for development. About twelve thousand existing schools are to be repaired five hundred new schools brought under the control of the Government and one hundred and ten school-cum-cyclone-shelters commissioned. About four thousand tubewells will be provided to the primary schools. The schools would also get sets of basic learning aid, black-boards, instructional wall charts, agricultural implement and other necessary materials.

4.6. Developmental activities also aimed at improvement of education at the university level. The total amount spent in 1976-77 for the universities, which are six in number, is a little more than 100 million Taka and this does not include the fund sanctioned for the various special projects and institutes within the universities. Special provisions were made in the development programmes for the improvement of sports and recreational facilities in the universities, and the total amount sanctioned for the purpose was around Taka 20 million.

4.7. Another important aspect of the development plan for the period under review was the establishment of two important institutions namely, the Planning Cell in the Ministry of Education itself and Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics. These institutions have been developed for the purposes of providing a sound basis to the processes of educational planning in the country through a scientific system of collection and analysis of data and preparation, implementation, supervision and evaluation of development projects.

4.8. A basic feature of the education scene in Bangladesh is the pre-dominance, at all levels, of educational institutions which have been set up and are run, and managed by people in the private sector. There are about forty thousand primary schools in the country and the vast majority of these was set up by the people themselves. The Government have now taken over the management of almost all of these, but even then a large number, approximately 4,000, continues to remain under private management. The number of secondary schools

is around 8500, but only about 150 are run by the Government. This is true in case of other educational institutions as well. The Government in this country did not take upon itself, during the pre-independence period, the responsibility of providing educational facilities to all the eligible citizens of the country. This explains the limited number of educational institutions established and managed by the Government itself. A large number of institutions were, therefore, of necessity, set up under private initiative, and these constitute the main-stay of the education system in the country. The institutions set up by the Government had more physical facilities than the others and the teachers in these institutions were in general more qualified too. There were, however, institutions in the private sector which could be compared very favourable to the Government institutions, but these were few in number. One of the aims of the present developmental activities is to narrow down the existing gap between Government and non-Government educational institutions. The non-Government institutions, which by far out-number the Goverment ones, can not continue to remain outside the consideration of the Government and the Government recognises its responsibility towards the development of these institutions and towards improvement of the educational standard in these. The Government can only supplement the efforts made in the private sector and a large number of the non-Government institutions have therefore been covered under the current development programme. The Government also provides a part of the renumeration of the teachers working in these institutions and this is intended to ensure quality of education. This part of the teachers' salary has recently been increased, and the increase has been 100% for some and from 50% to 90% for others. The total amount which will be required additionally to meet this increase is around 75 million Taka.

4.9. Development of productive skills related to economic development is an important area of concern in the education system of Bangladesh. Education must be clearly linked to the development and manpower needs of the country and the development of productive skills must take place in accordance with such needs. There is an attempt in Bangladesh towards integration of technical and vocational studies in the general system of education. Education is being made workoriented and the students are being encouraged to actively participate in the implementation of development schemes. Bangla-

desh is in search of an appropriate balance between general education and pre-vocational or vocational education, and has its own programme of the development of the productive skill of both in-school and out-of-school youth. Productive work would also be a source of learning and insight and will increase productivity of all the learners and minimise the problems of unemployment.

4.10. Another major aspect of the educational programme is the commitment of the Government to remove illiteracy within the shortest possible time. Universalization of the primary education is therefore a major concern of the Government. The Government have taken over the management of 36,165 primary schools out of an estimated total of forty thousand, primarily because these suffered from serious limitations such as lack of physical facilities and of trained teachers and also lack of fund. Universalization of primary education in Bangladesh is planned to be achieved by 1985. This means that not only basic educational facilities will be provided by that time but efforts will also be made to create conditions in which such facilities could be effectively and meaningfully utilised. The objectives and the contents of education will be functionally in terms of the needs of the lerners' groups and characteristics of the environment in which they live. The Government has already established an Academy for Fundamental Education. There are forty seven training institutes for the primary teachers, and the Academy for Fundamental Education will attempt to improve the quality of teachers training in these institutes. In-service training courses will be organised by the Academy for the instructors of the training institutes and also for the officers of the Education Department concerned with primary education. The Academy also aims at reviewing the syllabus for primary education from time to time so that the syllabus may remain up-to-date from the point of view of information and techniques of teaching and may also remain responsive to the needs of the society. The Government has initiated action to make universal free primany education compulsory in certain areas. These are the Zero Population Growth areas under a development scheme of the Ministry of Health and Family Planning. It is however, realised that before such education is made compulsory for the children of the relevent age group, there must be an adequate survey of the concerned children and their needs as well as a survey of the trends of future growth in these areas. On the basis of this survey adequate physical facilities should

be provided and trained teachers should be made available. The resources needed to provide adequate physical facilities to as large a number of primary school as there are in Bangladesh is difficult to mobilise. Equally difficult is the problem of providing training to about two hundred thousand primary teachers within a reasonable time. The problem of school drop-out, again, is not merely the problem of providing educational facilities; it goes far behind that and is deeply connected to the economic conditions of life. Under these severe limitations, universalization of primary education is indeed a difficult task to achieve. But efforts in this direction are being made and will continue to grow.

4.11. The Government is particularly concerned with the problem of removal of illiteracy among adults and out-of-school youths. The adult education programme is closely linked with the Academy for Rural Development in Comilla. There are about 1300 adult education centres all over the country and about 500 of these are exclusively meant for women. Books specially written for the adult have been distributed widely and the people themselves have been encouraged to take initiative for the education of the adults. Night schools have been set up at many places and the local administration keeps an eye on such schools to ensure that these survive against odds and make progress. On an average, there is one primary school in every two villages in Bangladesh. The Managing Committee of each of these primary schools has been enlarged to include local men of influence, and the only task assigned to the enlarged committee is that of providing education to adults of the village. A Union Parishad (local council) is the lowest local Government body with elected representatives and each of these Union Parishads has been asked to start adult education centres and to run these on voluntary basis. These schools are to be constructed by the people themselves, and the teaching arragements are also to be largely made on voluntary basis. The Union Parishads are also trying to involve the few educated women members of the village community in a programme which aims at imparting non-formal education to women and children of the village. This is also expected to help the efforts at introducing the concept and techniques of family planning and child care among the women folk.

4.12. The kind of education designed to be imparted to the adults will be functional in character. It is not mere literacy; nor is it rudimentary knowledge of life. It combines literacy and technical know-how; it encourages pro-

ductive schemes and introduces technological innovations; it creates a sense of identity as a nation and creates a new value system appropriate to development programmes.

4.13. Non-formal education system seems to be the most effective way for the purpose of adult education and education for out-of-school youths. This is also important in Bangladesh because of the close links here between education and rural development. Non-formal education however is not an inferior alternative to formal education. This is a totally different and effective instrument for manpower development and must be closely and clearly linked to the national developmental aspirations of each country. The non-formal education programmes in Bangladesh aim at providing skills to out of school youths and adults, at spreading mass education and removal of illiteracy and at relating education to developmental needs through use of educational technology. Two hundred Primary schools while retaining their basic characteristics are being planned also for functioning as community learning centre. Literacy schools, which apart from being educational units would also serve as centres of community service to be rendered by the college students, will be opened in about 500 colleges. Workers' schools will be organised in mills, factories and other industrial units. Radio and television broadcasts will also be widely utilised to supplement knowledge gained through printed materials and other sources. Nonformal education programme will cover both those who have not been to formal institutions, and those who need further and continuing education. Establishment of a high power national council for the formulation of policies and co-ordination of programmes in the area of non-formal education is expected.

4.14. Female education has received particular attention during the period under review. Teachers in all primary schools of the country are gradually being recruited from amongst the women. Women education centres are being set up for imparting education in family planning, farm and home management and other matters of interest to rural women. The women co-operative societies have also undertaken educational programmes. A special committee has been appointed at the national level to look after the problems of women education.

4.15. In teachers' education, the objective is to increase the number of professionally trained teachers at the primary and secondary level. In 1972-73 the number of teachers at the primary level was 0.125 million, and the percentage of trained teachers was 66. At the secondary level the number of teachers during the same period was 0.061 million of which only 30 percent was trained teachers. With increased enrolment, the number of primary teachers is expected to increase by 51 percent. The number of the secondary teachers will also increase. The proportion of trained primary teachers will rise from 66 percent to 71 percent—a modest increase in view of the large teacher population at this stage. At the secondary level, the percentage of trained teachers is likely to rise from 30 to 43 at the end of the Five Year Plan. A new education extension centre is being established to strengthen short term in-service training of teachers. Special courses, both short term and long term, are being introduced in the primary training institutes and the teachers training colleges. In-service courses for the teachers are being planned during vacation or other appropriate time in schools and colleges. The improvement of quality of teachers is given a high priority.

4.16. An innovative programme to improve the quality of education at the primary level was introduced in early 1976. This is known as Open Air Primary Education. The major objectives of the project were---

a) to make primary education interesting and attractive to young students through learning from environment so that the large drop-out rate could be reduced; and

b) to provide realistic and practical education to the primary school children.

The Open Air Primary Education Programme is not inferior either in quality or in effectiveness to the education imparted through traditional approaches in the formal school rooms. The programme is work-oriented and based in the community itself. An appropriate curriculum was developed for this Programme and teachers involved in the programme were given short training courses. The out-door activities which the students under this programme are encouraged to do include, among other things, survey of the village, agricultural work, skill-orinted craft-work; study of animals, birds and insects; study of plant, trees, shrubs etc. and identification and conservation of local resources. Contact with the teachers involved in this programme was established through radio.

which broadcast a special programme on a particular day of the week. These programmes included discussions on activities to be covered each week and also on likely problems and their solutions. The Open Air Education Programme during its second phase, plans to utilise the village education centres as school for religious education in the morning, school for primary/secondary education during the day-time, centre for women programme in the afternoon, centre for youth programme in the late afternoon, and adult education centre in the evening.

4.17. It is a policy of the Government to encourage the teachers and students to participate in development programmes and social welfare activities. A Work Company is being organised in each educational institution. The Work Company will have about 100 students as members and they will be trained and motivated to participate in nation building activities and social work.

4.18. There is a realisation of the need to bridge the gap between the contents of education at various levels. The educational content at the primary level should logically and naturally lead the learners to that at the secondary level, and higher education should also have its basis in the primary and secondary education programmes of the country. Education must be viewed as a co-ordinated whole, in which transition from one stage to another should not expose the learner to any state of confusion. Attempts are being made in Bangladesh to establish this logical link between the various stages and the various sectors of education, and this is being done primarily through a revision of the syllabus and the curriculam. There are for example, a large number of theological schools in the country and these are being moderanised. Science has been introduced as a subject of study in a number of these theological schools known as Madrasas. Theological education, which constituted a spearate and isolated stream in Bangladesh, is now being brought closer to general education, and religious education is also being emphasised in the schools imparting general education. This attempt at synthesising the various trends of education is a reflection of the basic concept of education as factor of development of total manpower in response to the needs of the nation.

5. Reforms in Education

5.1. In the context of developing nation, which is continually trying to identify the most effective ways of achieving its national targets, the system of

education remains under a continuous process of change. It is therefore difficult to draw in a developing country a fine line of distinction between educational reforms and other educational activities. The normal developmental activities in the education sector may also be viewed as a part of a total process of educational reforms as these provide the basic facilities within which reform can take place and as these basic facilities also influence and condition the reforms carried out. New dimensions have been added to education scene in Bangladesh. New ways have been explored. Innovative ideas are continually being monitored and evaluated. Each of these steps constitutes a kind of educational reform in its own quiet way. These small quiet steps have far reaching effects. Our reforms grow with our own system; these take place whenever the need for these is felt; these are not imposed from either above or outside.

5.2. The first major educational reform that has taken place since the independence is the change of the medium of instruction from English to Bangla (Bangali) which is the mother tongue of almost the entire population of the country. Bangla used to be the medium of instruction previously only at primary and secondary levels. The medium of instruction changed into English from higher secondary stage and continued to be so at both the graduation and the post-graduation levels in the university. Studends are now free to study and appear in the examinations in Bangla at all levels of education. This change, however, has not been made compulsory. Those who wish to take their examinations in English at the higher secondary and the university levels are free to do so. There are serious limitations, such as the lack of textbooks in Bangla, which stand in the way of effecting an immediate total change in the medium of instruction. Even those who decide to make their examinations in Bangla have mainly to study their subjects in English. Efforts are however being made to have original textbooks written in Bangla and to get standard text-books translated into Bangla from foreign languages.

5.3. The curriculum and syllabus followed at the primary and secondary levels were formulated in 1960, and since that time no major changes have been made in these areas. Bangladesh has in the mean time emerged as an independent nation; the socio cultural context in the country has changed; new national targets and objectives have been identified. In view of this, the

Government set up a National Curriculum and Syllabus Committee in 1975. Its tasks are

a) to advise the Government on the introduction of curricula conducive to the realisation of the national objectives;
b) to determine science and technology courses related to the trends of development in the modern world;
c) to help the Government to draw up principles relating to the production of suitable syllabi at different levels of education including technical and vocational institutions; and
d) to determine the needs of teachers' training, supply of instruments and equipments and other facilities in connection with the introduction of a probable new syllabus.

This committee has already submitted its report for the primary level and the first three years of the secondary level. The Government have accepted the recommendations made for the primary level and have decided to implement these recommendations for classes I to III from early 1978. The curriculum and syllabus recommended by the Committee aim at preventing the gradual erosion of time—honored value system and at creating a new value system appropriate to and necessary for the realization of the national goals, with special emphasis on developmental activities. Its emphasis is on the immediate environment of the child and on work-oriented education. It intends also to develop the potential productive skills in the children and to make them aware of the need for development . It aims at the same time to make the children conscious of social responsibilities of the people and of the history and an cultural heritage of the nation. Human qualities are emphasised and attempts are made to establish links with the broad stream of civilization.

5.4. While approving the recommendations of the Curriculum and the Syllabus Committee, the Government decided to introduce religious education as a compulsory subject at the primary level. Bangladesh has a majority of Muslim population, but there are Hindus, Christians, Buddhists and followers of other religions too. Courses developed on each of the major religious would be offered to the students.

5.5. Work on the writing and publication of text-books on the basis of the new curriculum and syllabus is in progress. The Government has decided

that the textbooks should be written in a clear and simple language and that a uniform system of spelling should be adopted. The Bangla Academy, a Government institution for research in Bangla language, literature and culture, has been given the responsibility of recommending to the Government a suitable system of spelling. When accepted and introduced at all levels, this would be a major step of far reaching consequence.

5.6. The Government has also decided to improve the standard of English language teaching in Bangladesh. English as a language enjoys a status next only to that of Bangla and is the only major international language which is widely understood and extensively used by the people. The Government had set up an English Language Task Force which has already submitted its report to the Government.

5.7. A brief mention has already been made of the efforts being made to introduce population education. The objectives of the population education projects are

a) development of population education materials for students and teachers;
b) orientation and training of the subject teachers in population education; and
c) testing of population education materials in actual class room situation.

Population education is being introduced in the formal school system of Bangladesh. The aim is to produce informed and socially responsible citizens who would be able to take retional decisions in their personal, family, community and social life on issues related to population. The teachers and students are also expected to have a multiplier effect. Training programmes are being organised for teacher educators, curriculum designers and other key personnel involved in teachers training. The programme also aims at providing training to about 40,000 teachers of primary schools, 8,000 headmasters of secondary schools, 600 college teachers, heads of vocational and technical institutes and about 400 field officers of the Directorate of Education.

5.8. Another important step in the educational reform was the constitution of an Education Environment Committee at the national level. The Committee at the national level is supported by Zonal Environment Committees at various administrative divisions of the country. The Committee has the authority of

making recommedations to the Government. The main responsibility of the Committee is to ensure that proper environment is created and sustained in all educational institutions including universities for the pursuit of knowledge and attainment of academic goals, that academic life is not interrupted or disturbed in any way and that facilities necessary for proper implementation of academic programmes are made available. Some of the major recommendation of the Committee are that the premises of the educational institutions should not be made venues for political meetings, rallies and processions, and that full time employees of the universities, colleges and other educational institutions should not take part in political parties or be candidates in the elections. The Committee also recommended that there should be uniform service rules and pay-scales for the teachers of all non-Government colleges. It also suggested that in order to minimise the pressure on the universities, some of the colleges should be developed to be able to offer Honours and post-graduate courses. The Government has already decided to develop four important colleges of the country, two in the north and the others in the south, into what has popularly come to be known as mini-universities. These colleges will offer courses in selected subjects at the Honours and the postgraduate levels like the universities, but will not have the authority to conduct public examinations and to confer degrees. The Education Environment Committee meets regularly to review the academic environment prevailing in the educational institutions.

5.9. Efforts are also being made to introduce reforms in the areas of educational administration. Immediately after the liberation a large number of schools and colleges were set up under private initiative all over the country, and this happened because of the zeal of the people to promote national interest which was considered to be attainable only through expansion of education and removal of illiteracy. Most of these institutions were, unfortunately, ill-planned and soon found themselves in unenviable financial conditions; there were lack of teachers, books and instructional equipments; the number of students also registered a fall. In view of this, the Government has set up a Merger Committee, the responsibility of which is to examine the possibilities of combining two or more such non-Government schools and/or colleges into one single unit, in order to make the unit economically viable and to ensure that the unit is capable of meeting the educational needs of the locality. The reports of

the Merger Committee on all areas have not as yet been submitteed to the Government. The educational scene in Bangladesh is expected to change meaningfully when the reports of the Merger Committee are acted upon.

5.10. The educational administration system itself calls for an urgent review. The Directorate of Education is responsible for the entire education system of the country from the primary to the pre-university and, at times, degrees level, with the exception of technical and vocational education which is taken care of by the Directorate of Technical Education. The Director of Public Instruction (DPI), who is the head of the Education Directorate, has nearly two hundred thousand employees under his administrative control, and about one hundred offices report directly to him seeking not only decision but all manners of things that they stand in need of. This is centralization as its worst. This apart, the policies, plans, directions etc. calling for action of various nature, that emanate from the Ministry must also receive equal attention from the DPI. Thus in the recent years with manifold increase in educational activities DPI has existed precariously between irresitable pressure from above and below. An administrative mechinary that is old, and over-burdened can by no means be expected to fullfil the country's educational aims. The Government is actively considering re-organization of the educational administration system.

6. Educational Institutions and the Community

6.1. Education traditionally is primarily the responsibility of the community in Bangladesh. As has already been noted, the vast majority of the educational institutions have been established and are run not by the Government but by the people. This is also true of the public libraries in the country. Education always constituted an important part of the responsibilities of the local Government bodies. Only recently Union Education Committee has been set up as an expert Committee of each Union Council. The main functions of the Committee are to co-ordinate the activities of the managing committees of the primary schools; to mobilise local resources and prepare and implement local plan and programmes for the development of primary schools; and to assist the implementation of development projects on primary education at the Union level. The elected representatives of the people have been given the authority to visit primary schools and keep the appropriate education officer

informed of their observations for taking the action that is called for. The community in general looks forward to educational institutions for moral cultural and intellectual leadership. The education programmes developed in recent times, such as the Open Air Education Programme or the Non-formal Education Programme, have their basis in the community. Government programmes in the education sector are designed to help, assist and promote and efforts being made by the community and to create conditions in which the efforts made by the community can grow stronger.

7. International Dimension in National Education

7.1. Though the educational contents at various levels in Bangladesh are primarily intended to project national heritage and national aspirations, these are neither narrowly defined nor designed to confine the interest of the learner to the national scene only. Attempts are made to keep the information provided the students up-to date, and this is made possible through close international contacts with development in the fields of educational techniques and also in the areas of various disciplines. The education system is geared to promote international understanding and co-operation as there is an international perspective in the curriculum and syllabus from primary to university level. Cultural agreements between Bangladesh and a large number of countries are in operation. There are regular exchanges of teachers, students and intellectual leaders between Bangladesh and these countries. Educational information and materials are also exchanged.

7.2. Various international agencies have helped Bangladesh in the formulation and execution of its development programmes. There has been international co-operation in other fields too, the principal of which are teacher training, language teaching, teaching of science and mathematics and examination reform. Bangladesh plans to set up an Islamic University to facilitate the study of and research on Islam and allied areas and to promote understanding between the Muslim nations.

7.3. Seminars Workshops and Meetings organised from time to time also help Bangaldesh in gaining international insight into the problems of education. The Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration, which met in Dacca in 1977, has, for example, provided Bangaladesh with an opportunity

of evaluating its own problems of educational administration in the light of of international experience.

7.4. Bangladesh receives a large number of scholarships from foreign countries. It also offers a few, specially in the field of agriculture, medicine and engineering. Bangladesh plans to organise study tours of its students and teachers in foreign countries to expose them to the latest trends in international thinking.

7.5. Bangladesh has largely benefited from its membership of Unesco and is keen to promote Unesco activity. As a member of the Asian Programme of Educational Innovation for Development, Bangladesh firmly believes in the philosophy of viewing education as an instrument of development and as a vehicle of international understanding, friendship and co-operation. The aim of education, in the final analysis, is to ensure the progress of man, and we are of the view that the man, whom education serves in modern times, has his own national character and identity and is yet an international being, belonging to the eternal stream of civilization.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

A. BASIC FEATURES OF THE CGUNTRY.

1. Geographical Location— Bangladesh lies in the North-Eastern Part of the South Asian Sub-Continent roughly between 20.30′ and 26.45′ North Latitude and 88.00′ and 92.56′ Longitude.

2. Total Area— 55,598 Sq. miles or 143,998 Sq. K.m.

3. Population : (a)

Male	Female	Total
3,70,71,740	3,44,07,331	7,14,79,071 (1974)

(b) Population under 15 Years of age— 3,43,72,000

(c) Rate of Population growth— 3.00%

(d) Rural Population— 6,52,05,000

Urban Population— 62,74,071

4. Language Spoken--- Bangla.

5. Independence day-- 26th March.

6. Date of victory at Liberation War-- 16th December, 1971.

B. FIRST FIVE YEAR PLAN 1973-78

1. Total size of the plan :— (in million Taka) — Tk. 44550.00 million

2. Total Allocation for the Education Sector in the plan :— (in million Taka) — Tk. 3500.00 million.

3. Budget (in million Taka) :—

Year	Total Budget	Allocation for Education		
		Development	Revenue	Total
1973-74	Tk. 5253.511 m.	378.200 m.	Tk. 648.10m.	1026.300 m.
1974-75	Tk. 5250.000 m.	330.000 m.	Tk. 822.10m.	1152.100 m.
1975-76	Tk. 9500.000 m.	450.000 m.	Tk. 834.45m.	1284.450 m.
1976-77	Tk. 12220.000 m.	555.400 m.	Tk. 1021.10m.	1576.500 m.
1977-78	Tk. 12784.983 m.	624.413 m.	Tk. 1139.00m.	1763.413 m.

C. EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES.

Level	Total No of Institution	Total No. of Govt.	Total No. of Students. Male	Female	Total No. of Teachers.	Remark
Primary	39,914	36,165	56,24,543	29,06,081	1,64,717	
Secondary	8,327	152	14,51,558	4,91,628	79,342	
College	611	36	3,30,453	50,020	12,948	
Madrashas (Theological Institutions)	6,411	2	5,62,988	1,93,247	27,156	
Vocational Training Ins.	22	22	880	—	132	
Vocational Education at Polytechnic Inst.	13	13	2,600	—	187	
Polytechnic Institutes	17	17	3,500	—	145	
Engineering College	3	3	1,870	—	159	
Medical College	9 (including P.G.)	8	4,445	802	448	
Teachers Training College	6	6	1,306	530	101	
College of Education	6	6	869	194	64	
Primary Training Institute	47	47	6,398	1,229	611	
Agricultural University	1	—	2,459	27	272	
Engineering University	1	—	1,704	33	209	
General University	4	—	21,083	4,660	1315	